

to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 733. A bill to ensure the continued and future availability of life saving trauma health care in the United States and to prevent further trauma center closures and downgrades by assisting trauma centers with uncompensated care costs, core mission services, and emergency needs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BROWNBACK (for himself and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. Res. 86. A resolution designating April 18, 2009, as "National Auctioneers Day"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. CARPER):

S. Res. 87. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the Nation during Public Service Recognition Week, May 4 through 10, 2009; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. HAGAN (for herself, Mr. BURR, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. Res. 88. A resolution honoring the life of Dr. John Hope Franklin; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 21

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 21, a bill to reduce unintended pregnancy, reduce abortions, and improve access to women's health care.

S. 277

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 277, a bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to expand and improve opportunities for service, and for other purposes.

S. 355

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. BURRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 355, a bill to enhance the capacity of the United States to undertake global development activities, and for other purposes.

S. 414

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 414, a bill to amend the Consumer Credit Protection Act, to ban abusive credit practices, enhance consumer disclosures, protect underage consumers, and for other purposes.

S. 422

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms.

SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 422, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act and the Public Health Service Act to improve the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart disease, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases in women.

S. 456

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 456, a bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to develop guidelines to be used on a voluntary basis to develop plans to manage the risk of food allergy and anaphylaxis in schools and early childhood education programs, to establish school-based food allergy management grants, and for other purposes.

S. 468

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 468, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to emergency medical services and the quality and efficiency of care furnished in emergency departments of hospitals and critical access hospitals by establishing a bipartisan commission to examine factors that affect the effective delivery of such services, by providing for additional payments for certain physician services furnished in such emergency departments, and by establishing a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Working Group, and for other purposes.

S. 482

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 482, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 483

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 483, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Mark Twain.

S. 484

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 484, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 511

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 511, a bill to amend part B of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an exemption of pharmacies and pharmacists from certain Medicare accreditation requirements in the same manner as such exemption applies to certain professionals.

S. 524

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Nebraska

(Mr. JOHANNIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 524, a bill to amend the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 to provide for the expedited consideration of certain proposed rescissions of budget authority.

S. 526

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 526, a bill to provide in personam jurisdiction in civil actions against contractors of the United States Government performing contracts abroad with respect to serious bodily injuries of members of the Armed Forces, civilian employees of the United States Government, and United States citizen employees of companies performing work for the United States Government in connection with contractor activities, and for other purposes.

S. 561

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 561, a bill to authorize a supplemental funding source for catastrophic emergency wildland fire suppression activities on Department of the Interior and National Forest System lands, to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a cohesive wildland fire management strategy, and for other purposes.

S. 570

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 570, a bill to stimulate the economy and create jobs at no cost to the taxpayers, and without borrowing money from foreign governments for which our children and grandchildren will be responsible, and for other purposes.

S. 599

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) and the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) were added as cosponsors of S. 599, a bill to amend chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, to create a presumption that a disability or death of a Federal employee in fire protection activities caused by any certain diseases is the result of the performance of such employee's duty.

S. 607

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 607, a bill to amend the National Forest Ski Area Permit Act of 1986 to clarify the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture regarding additional recreational uses of National Forest System land that are subject to ski area permits, and for other purposes.

S. 614

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator

from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 614, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots ("WASP").

S. 645

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) were added as cosponsors of S. 645, a bill to amend title 32, United States Code, to modify the Department of Defense share of expenses under the National Guard Youth Challenge Program.

S. 702

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 702, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow long-term care insurance to be offered under cafeteria plans and flexible spending arrangements and to provide additional consumer protections for long-term care insurance.

AMENDMENT NO. 687

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 687 proposed to H.R. 1388, a bill entitled "The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, an Act to reauthorize and reform the national service laws."

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 712. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the Medicare program for beneficiaries residing in rural areas; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today, along with my colleague Senator COLLINS from Maine, I am introducing legislation to address the needs of the nearly one-quarter of all Medicare beneficiaries who live in rural America. These beneficiaries are systematically disadvantaged in the Medicare program. The beauty of Medicare is its equity, its universality, and its accessibility. But we have compromised these values by stratifying payments, by under-representing rural voices on the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, and by continuing to use obsolete payment data that hurts rural America.

First, we must stop indexing physician payments for work based on geographic differences. Rural areas already have a hard enough time recruiting and retaining the Nation's top talent. Currently, even though 25 percent of Medicare beneficiaries live in rural areas, only 10 percent of the nation's physicians serve them. Lower payments to doctors in these areas only perpetuate this dangerous shortage of medical expertise. We should not be

discouraging medical school graduates from moving to underserved rural areas by continuing to offer sub-par pay—in fact, we should be providing incentives to encourage them to work in underserved areas. My legislation proposes a project to help rural facilities to host educators and clinical practitioners in clinical rotations.

Lack of dollars to rural health facilities has also prevented communities from investing in vital information technology. The Institute of Medicine published a report in 2005 detailing the ways in which health IT could assist isolated communities. For example, since rural physicians tend to be generalists rather than specialists, virtual libraries within physician offices would provide both doctors and patients with a wider and deeper source of information at their fingertips. Rural residents can also be quite far from health facilities, so technology that allows emergency room physicians to communicate with EMS workers in an ambulance can help patients receive life-saving treatment before they physically reach the hospital. These kinds of technologies will improve both the quality and efficiency of care given in rural areas. My legislation offers funding for quality improvement demonstration projects, to allow isolated communities to invest in this otherwise out of reach technology.

Lastly, this legislation will end the disproportionately low representation of rural interests on the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. This lack of representation has resulted in policies that hurt rural communities. Those policies have hurt—and continue to hurt—the people of my State of Wisconsin, and they hurt my colleague Senator COLLINS' constituents as well. For every dollar that Medicare spends on the average beneficiary in the average state in this country, Medicare spends only 82 cents on a beneficiary in Wisconsin. In Maine, Medicare spends only 80 cents per dollar it spends on the average beneficiary.

How is this the case, if beneficiaries in Wisconsin and in Maine pay the same payroll taxes as beneficiaries in other states? Because the distribution of Medicare dollars among the 50 States is grossly unfair to Wisconsin, and to much of the Upper Midwest. Wisconsinites pay payroll taxes just like every American taxpayer, but the Medicare funds we get in return are lower than those received in many other States.

With the guidance and support of people across my State who are fighting for Medicare fairness, I am introducing this legislation to address Medicare's discrimination against Wisconsin's seniors and health care providers. My bill will decrease some of the inequitable payments that harm rural areas. It will provide rural areas the help they need to grow crucial health information technology infrastructure. It will offer the necessary incentives to help attract the Nation's top medical

talent to underserved rural areas. It will mandate rural representation on the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. Rural seniors are already underserved in their communities; they should not be underrepresented in Washington as well.

Rural Americans have worked hard and paid into the Medicare program all their lives. In return, they deserve full access to the same benefits as seniors throughout the country: their choice of highly skilled physicians, use of the latest technologies, and a strong voice representing their needs in Medicare policy.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 712

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Rural Medicare Equity Act of 2009".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Elimination of geographic physician work adjustment factor from geographic indices used to adjust payments under the physician fee schedule.
- Sec. 3. Clinical rotation demonstration project.
- Sec. 4. Medicare rural health care quality improvement demonstration projects.
- Sec. 5. Ensuring proportional representation of interests of rural areas on the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission.
- Sec. 6. Implementation of GAO recommendations regarding geographic adjustment indices under the Medicare physician fee schedule.

SEC. 2. ELIMINATION OF GEOGRAPHIC PHYSICIAN WORK ADJUSTMENT FACTOR FROM GEOGRAPHIC INDICES USED TO ADJUST PAYMENTS UNDER THE PHYSICIAN FEE SCHEDULE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Variations in the geographic physician work adjustment factors under section 1848(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-4(e)) result in inequity between localities in payments under the Medicare physician fee schedule.

(2) Beneficiaries under the Medicare program that reside in areas where such adjustment factors are high have relatively more access to services that are paid based on such fee schedule.

(3) There are a number of studies indicating that the market for health care professionals has become nationalized and historically low labor costs in rural and small urban areas have disappeared.

(4) Elimination of the adjustment factors described in paragraph (1) would equalize the reimbursement rate for services reimbursed under the Medicare physician fee schedule while remaining budget-neutral.

(b) ELIMINATION.—Section 1848(e) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-4(e)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(A)(iii), by striking "an index" and inserting "for services provided before January 1, 2010, an index"; and